WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A powdered thickener preparation produced by forming a solution, suspension or melt of a mixture comprising

a) at least one urethane group-containing, water-soluble or water-dispersible thickener,

b) at least one substance solid at room temperature

c) optionally a non-ionic, aromatic or aliphatic emulsifier and

d) optionally other auxiliary substances

and subsequently converting the products obtained into powder form by drying or grinding.

2. The thickener preparation of claim 1 wherein component (b) is a water-insoluble substance with an average particle size of < 20 µm.

3. The thickener preparation of claim 1 wherein component (b) comprises a water-soluble substance.

4. The thickener preparation of claim 1 wherein component (b) comprises pyrogenic silica.

5. The thickener preparation of claim 1 wherein component (b) comprises calcium carbonate, magnesium carbonate or mixtures thereof.

6. The thickener preparation of claim 1 wherein component (b) comprises barium sulfate, titanium dioxide or talcum.

7. The thickener preparation of claim 1 wherein component (b) comprises cellulose, sugar or a water-soluble carbohydrate.

8. The thickener preparation of claim 1 wherein component (b) comprises a water-soluble (co)polymer salt of acrylic, methacrylic or aspartic acid.

9. The thickener preparation of claim 1 wherein component (b) comprises urea.

10. A process for adjusting the rheological properties of aqueous systems by adding the thickener preparation of claim 1 to the aqueous system.

11. A composition of matter containing the thickener preparation of claim 1.

12. The composition of matter of claim 11, wherein the composition is an aqueous automotive and industrial lacquer, a stucco- or other paint, a printing ink or a textile dye, a pigment printing paste, an aqueous pharmaceutical and cosmetic formulation, a plant protection formulation, a filler or a pigment dispersion, a preparation of a detergent, adhesive, waxe or polish or a preparation for petroleum extraction.